

# MIFTAAH SEMINAR

## A CHANGING WORLD: UNCOVERING THE VEILS OF ILLUSION



Shaykh Suleiman Hani

### SESSION 2

#### Prophet Yunus AS

- **The People of Yunus AS:**

- His people were idol worshippers with a worldview based on shirk.
- He called them to worship Allah, warning of punishment if they did not repent.
- Prophet Yunus AS left his people prematurely, which he was not supposed to do.

- **The Signs and Repentance:**

- After he left, the skies began to change colors, signaling impending punishment.
- The people, aware of what had happened to previous nations, repented sincerely to Allah.
- Allah accepted their repentance and saved them from punishment. This is referenced in **Surah Yunus**, where they are noted as the only nation saved in such a way.
- Prophet Yunus AS eventually returned to his people, who had all become believers. Allah describes their number as **100,000 or more** in the Quran.

#### Prophet Musa AS

- **Status and Trials:**

- Musa AS was one of the **أولو العزم** (messengers of strong resolve)

- and **Kaleem Allah** (the one to whom Allah spoke directly) and seen on the sixth level of heaven during Isra and Mi'raj.
- Sent to Fir'oun, one of history's most tyrannical rulers, to call him and his people to worship Allah.
- **Fir'oun's Repeated Rejection of Signs:**
  - Fir'oun saw multiple signs from Allah. After each punishment, he promised to release Bani Israel but reneged every time.
  - **The Believing Relative of Fir'oun:**
    - Fir'oun's cousin or relative tried to reason with him, using emotional, spiritual, historical, and intellectual arguments:
      1. Are you killing Musa AS simply because his Lord is Allah?
      2. Musa AS brought clear signs.
      3. If he is lying, Allah will deal with him. If he is truthful, calamities will befall you.
- **Crossing the Red Sea:**
  - Musa AS and Bani Israel were trapped between Fir'oun's army and the sea when Allah split the sea as a miraculous sign.
  - Fir'oun and his army arrogantly pursued, despite witnessing this clear miracle, and were drowned.
  - **Lesson:** Fir'oun's arrogance highlights that disbelief often stems from internal issues, not a lack of evidence.
- **The 70 Disciples of Musa AS** الحواريين:
  - Musa AS chose 70 people to ask Allah for forgiveness.
  - Despite witnessing miracles, they demanded to see Allah directly.
  - They were struck down by Allah and later resurrected, at which point they sought forgiveness.

### Prophet Sulaiman AS

- **The Queen of Saba (Bilqees):**
  - Her people were sun worshippers, a common practice in

- ancient civilizations.
- After meeting Prophet Sulaiman AS, she submitted to Allah, saying, **“I submit to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”**

### Prophet Isa AS

- **Request for the Heavenly Feast:**
  - His disciples requested a feast from the heavens as a sign to strengthen their faith, affirm Isa’s AS prophethood, and testify to others.
  - Isa AS made dua, and Allah sent the feast with a condition: those who disbelieved after witnessing it would face unparalleled punishment.
- **Plot Against Isa AS:**
  - A plot was devised to arrest and punish Isa AS. He asked his disciples who would take his resemblance and sacrifice themselves in exchange for Jannah.
  - The youngest disciple accepted, and Isa AS was raised to the heavens. This marked the beginning of distorted beliefs among his followers.
- **Return of Isa AS:**
  - At the end of times, Isa AS will return and follow the sharia of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, teaching the final revelation.

### Prophet Muhammed ﷺ and the Final Revelation

- The year 570 marked the birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the final messenger of Allah.
- **Qur'anic Command: اِقْرَأْ (Read):**
  - The final message from Allah to His creation.
  - No messengers decreed after him: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the **Seal of the Prophets**.
- **Preservation of the Message:**
  - Unlike previous messages, which were altered or lost, this final

- message is preserved until the end of time.
- The Qur'an serves as an everlasting miracle and a source of guidance for those seeking the truth.
- **Historical Context of Prophethood:**
  - Approximately **124,000 prophets** sent across history.
  - Some prophets had no followers; others had many.
  - Despite the clarity of the message of Tawheed (Oneness of Allah), messages were often distorted by Shaytan's influence.
- **Qur'anic Reminder on Guidance**

فَإِذَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*"When My message comes to you, whoever follows it, there is no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:38)*

### Historical Shifts in Worldview

- **Pre-Modernism (400 BCE - 1700s):**
  - **Focus:** Metaphysics and exploration beyond the physical world.
  - Discussions centered on the **reality of life, God, and the soul.**
  - Key Influences: Greek philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle).
    - Borrowed ideas from earlier civilizations, e.g., the Babylonians, who had already distorted the message of Prophet Ibrahim AS.
- **Modernism (1700s - 1950):**
  - **Focus:**
    - Secularism, reason, and the rejection of religious traditions (especially Christian scriptures).
    - Rise of **epistemology**: "How do we know what we know?"
  - **Impact on Belief Systems:**
    - Reaction to issues within Christianity led to general rejection of religion.
    - Shift from divine focus to human-centered ideologies.
  - **Trap of Shaytan**

- Encouraged people to focus on the dunya and immediate desires, neglecting the Hereafter.
- Qur'anic Warning:
 

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

*“Indeed, you love the immediate [world] and leave behind the Hereafter.”(Surah Al-Qiyamah 75:20-21)*
- **Postmodernism (1950 - Present):**
  - **Focus:** Subjectivity and relativism.
    - Truths and moral values are seen as arbitrary and self-created.
  - **Advantages:**
    - Exposed flaws in rationalism and limitations of human reasoning.
  - **Challenges for Muslims:**
    - Islam is often critiqued through lenses shaped by other worldviews, leading to misunderstandings and distorted perceptions.
    - Example: The rejection of objective divine guidance due to external influences (e.g., media, peers).

### The Influence of Secularism on Society

- **Key Characteristics of Secularism (1700s Onwards):**
  - Removal of the divine from societal discourse.
  - Replacing belief in God with focus on human condition, desires, and instant gratification.
  - Rise of ideologies like **secular humanism, atheism, and agnosticism.**
- **Connection to Shaytan’s Strategy:**
  - Gradual distancing of people from God and the Hereafter.
  - Encouragement of materialism and hedonism.
- **Qur'anic Guidance:**

*"It [the Qur'an] is a healing for what is in the hearts and a guidance and mercy for the believers.(Surah Yunus 10:57)*

## Impact of External Worldviews on Muslims

- **Challenges:**

- Exposure to philosophies and ideologies leads to changes in perception and beliefs.
- Influences from media, books, and peers can distort understanding of Islam.

- **The Correct Approach:**

- Start with the foundation of divine guidance.
- Use the lens of Islam to view and understand the world.
- Qur'anic Guidance:

فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*"Whoever follows My guidance, there is no fear upon them nor shall they grieve." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:38)*

## Epistemology: The Theory of Knowledge

### Empiricism

- **Definition:** Knowledge derived from sensory experience.
- **Key Features:**
  - Associated with science and observation.
  - Proponents like David Hume often emphasize empirical proof and may reject non-material realities.
  - Materialists take empiricism to the extreme, denying anything beyond the material world.

### Rationalism

- **Definition:** Knowledge acquired through reasoning and logic.
- **Key Features:**
  - Focus on rational analysis to solve problems and draw conclusions.

## Testimony

- **Definition:** Knowledge gained from what others convey through speech, writing, or other communication.
- **Key Features:**
  - A significant source of knowledge for things we haven't directly experienced.
  - Examples include books, peer-reviewed articles, and scientific reports.

## Revelatory Knowledge

- **Definition:** Knowledge revealed through a supernatural source.
- **Key Features:**
  - For Muslims, this refers to **wahy** (revelation), primarily through Angel Jibreel to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
  - The **Qur'an** and its miraculous nature serve as a proof of divine revelation.

## Fitrah

- **Definition:** Innate knowledge or natural disposition placed in humans by Allah.
- **Key Features:**
  - Humans are born with an innate sense of basic truths, morality, and belief in a Creator.
  - Philosophers throughout history have concluded that humans have an internal faculty for recognizing foundational truths (e.g., causality, justice).
  - Allah refers to this in the Qur'an as **فطرة الله التي فطر الناس عليها** (Allah's natural disposition upon which He created mankind).

## Key Reflections for Muslims

### Balanced Approach to Knowledge:

Muslims utilize all five sources of knowledge in their appropriate

contexts, recognizing their limitations. For example:

- Empiricism is vital for understanding the physical world but insufficient for metaphysical truths.
- Rationalism complements but cannot replace revelation or fitrah.

### **Challenges in Modern Skepticism:**

- **Over-reliance on Empiricism:** Many atheists and skeptics reject metaphysical knowledge, relying solely on empirical evidence.
- **Radical Skepticism:** Some doubt even the existence of reality outside their own minds (e.g., "brains in a jar" or simulation theories).

**Articulating Faith:** Every Muslim should be able to succinctly explain why Islam is the truth, grounding their belief in:

- The miraculous nature of the Qur'an.
- Consistency between revelation and rationality.
- The fitrah's innate recognition of Allah as the Creator.

### **The Trap of Shaytan: Deception and Strategies**

#### **The Vow of Shaytan and Its Implications**

- Shaytan vowed to mislead the children of Adam into disobedience to Allah.
- **Contemporary challenges:** In a secular, postmodern world, many reject the notions of truth and falsehood, creating their own subjective truths.
  - Shaytan uses philosophies and ideologies to misguide people, making harmful things appear appealing and beneficial.
  - Philosophies influenced by Shaytan often promote desires, temptations, and actions contrary to Islamic principles.



## Strategies of Shaytan

- **Making Sin Appealing:**

- Shaytan beautifies sin to make it desirable, hiding its destructive consequences.
- **Examples:**
  - Music, alcohol, smoking.
  - Social media, interest (riba), cross-gender friendships.
  - Misconceptions about love and happiness.
- Quranic evidence:

قل إن الله لا يأمر بالفحشاء

*“Say, Allah does not command anything filthy or bad...” (Surah Al-A’raf: 28).*

- **False Promises:**

- Shaytan gives empty promises and false hopes.

يَعِدُّهُمْ وَيُمْنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

*“He promises them and fills them with false hopes. But Shaytan’s promises are nothing but deception.” (Surah An-Nisa: 120).*

- Shaytan can mislead even well-meaning Muslims:
  - Example: Backbiting under the guise of enjoining good (*al-amr bil-ma’ruf*) and forbidding evil (*an-nahy ‘an al-munkar*).

- **Exploiting Weaknesses:**

- Shaytan targets individuals based on their desires or vulnerabilities.
- The love of dunya (worldly life) is a key objective:
  - The more attached people are to dunya, the less focused they are on Allah.
- Shaytan’s battlegrounds include:
  - **Entertainment:** Desensitizing individuals to sin through media and culture.
  - **Normalization of sin:** What becomes normalized in one generation is taken further by the next.

- **Extravagance and Waste:**
  - Excess and wastefulness are traps of Shaytan.  
 إن المبذرين كانوا إخوان الشياطين وكان الشيطان لربه كفورا  
*“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord.” (Surah Al-Isra: 27).*
  - Modern examples:
    - Extravagant weddings that lead to debt.
    - Wasteful consumer habits (e.g., food waste statistics in the US).
  - Prophet Muhammad (SAW) cautioned against excess, even in wudu:
    - “Do not waste, even if you are on the banks of a flowing river.”
- **Doubts:**
  - Doubts can lead to deviation if not addressed appropriately.
    - Seek knowledge, ask Allah for protection, and find intellectual responses to doubts.
- **Gradualism:**
  - Shaytan’s approach is often gradual:
    - He sets the stage step by step to lead individuals into major sins or to create discord.
  - Examples:
    - Breaking relationships (e.g., marriages, families, communities).
    - Sowing mistrust and exploiting anger.
- **Self-Reliance and Arrogance:**
  - Thinking one’s success is solely due to personal effort, without acknowledging Allah.
  - Example from the Quran:
    - Qarun, whose wealth led him to arrogance and ultimately his destruction.
    - Lesson: Gratitude and reliance on Allah are essential.

## Signs of Allah and the Path to Success

- Everything in existence is a sign of Allah:

فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*“Whoever follows My guidance will have no fear, nor shall they grieve.”  
(Surah Al-Baqarah: 38).*

- **Definition of Success:**

فَمَنْ رُخِّصَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ

*“Whoever is saved from the fire and admitted into Paradise has succeeded.” (Surah Aal-E-Imran: 185).*

- The Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

من أطاعني دخل الجنة ومن عصاني دخل النار

*“Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has refused.”*

## Key Takeaways

- Shaytan’s traps are multifaceted but consistent: he aims to lead people away from Allah through deception, temptation, and false promises.
- As believers:
  - Recognize Shaytan’s strategies.
  - Stay grounded in the Quran and Sunnah.
  - Constantly seek Allah’s guidance and protection.
  - Avoid normalization of sin, extravagance, and arrogance.
  - Focus on gratitude, reliance on Allah, and preparation for the Hereafter.